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City Council
City of Costa Mesa, California

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements of the City of Costa Mesa (the "City") as of and for the year ended June 30, 2009, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, we considered the City's internal control over financial reporting as a basis for designing our auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the City's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the City's internal control.

A control deficiency exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent or detect misstatements on a timely basis. A significant deficiency is a control deficiency, or combination of control deficiencies, that adversely affects the entity's ability to initiate, authorize, record, process, or report financial data reliably in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles such that there is more than a remote likelihood that a misstatement of the entity's financial statements that is more than inconsequential will not be prevented or detected by the entity's internal control.

A material weakness is a significant deficiency, or combination of significant deficiencies, that results in more than a remote likelihood that a material misstatement of the financial statements will not be prevented or detected by the entity's internal control.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph and would not necessarily identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. We did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we considered to be material weaknesses.

The matters below do not represent significant deficiencies in internal control, but are offered for your consideration as an opportunity to further enhance the City's system of internal control:

(1) Ethics Policy

We evaluated the City's conformance to the best practices recommended by the Auditing Standards Board as a part of the new auditing standards that take effect for 2008 audits. We noted that the City already has in place a number of practices to communicate its expectation of ethical behavior to all employees through verbal communications, trainings, and by setting proper tone at the top. However our audit procedures revealed the City does not have a formalized ethics policy. A well structured ethics policy establishes organizational standards for ethics, morals, and an overall "regard for the rules" philosophical approach within an entity. Specifically, matters such as honesty, integrity, compliance with laws and regulations, adherence to corporate policy, and upholding the City's high values and reputation are addressed. We also noted that the City's practices do not include a clearly communicated process for employees to report suspected fraud or other unethical conduct. A strong ethics policy is the foundation upon which an Organization builds its culture, which should then permeate all levels of personnel and guide all business dealings and

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transactions. This can be most effective in establishing a highly ethical and antifraud culture within any business organization.

Recommendation

We recommend that the City establish and implement an ethics policy. We also suggest that the City implement an effective reporting mechanism for fraud and other unethical conduct. Internal reporting channels, such as hotlines for anonymous tips, or a clearly defined reporting protocol (what to report, who to report to, etc.), have been found to be effective. Generally, centralized reporting to a party (such as Human Resources, etc.) outside the involved department have been found to be most effective.

(2) Accounting for Cost Reimbursement Grants

The City receives grant funding from a number of sources. The activity for certain of these grants is properly recorded in individual special revenue funds. For cost reimbursement grants that are reflected in separate funds, the ending equity should be relatively small, as grant revenues should approximate grant expenditures annually. We noted that for the year ended June 30, 2009 the HOME Fund had a deficit in ending equity of \$385,049 and the Community Development Block Grant Fund had a deficit of \$90,745. The cause of these deficits could be the recording of expenditures that are not reimbursable or not claiming expenditures that are eligible for reimbursement. These funds should be reviewed to ensure that the activity for the cost reimbursement grants are being accounted for properly.

Recommendation

We recommend that the City review its current procedures in place to review and reconcile these grant funds. The City should also ascertain the reason for the accumulated fund deficits and implement procedures to investigate deficits in the future.

(3) Establish Policy to Address Stale Dated Checks

The June 2009 bank reconciliation included over 500 outstanding checks. Of those outstanding checks 68 had been outstanding over six months, and several checks had been outstanding since November 2007. The City currently does not have a written policy providing guidance on how to account for stale dated checks. The City should consider developing a written policy that would identify the procedures to be performed for checks outstanding over a certain period of time.

Recommendation

We recommend that the City create a policy for handling outstanding checks that are greater than a certain amount of time, perhaps six months. This policy should include guidance in researching the cause, sample entries to restore cash and situations when to issue another check to the payable party. This will allow for more complete and accurate accounting records.

This report is intended solely for the information and use of management of the City and City Council and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Mayor Hoffman McCann P.C.

Irvine, California
December 11, 2009



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SUMMARY OF AUDIT RESULTS

We have audited the financial statements of the City of Costa Mesa ("the City") for the year ended June 30, 2009, and have issued our report thereon dated December 11, 2009. Professional standards require that we provide you with the following information related to our audit.

Our Responsibilities under U.S. Generally Accepted Auditing Standards and OMB Circular A-133

Our responsibility, as described by professional standards, is to express opinions about whether the financial statements prepared by management with your oversight are fairly presented, in all material respects, in conformity with U.S. generally accepted accounting principles. Our audit of the financial statements does not relieve you or management of your responsibilities.

In planning and performing our audit, we considered City's internal control over financial reporting in order to determine our auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing our opinions on the financial statements and not to provide assurance on the internal control over financial reporting. We also considered internal control over compliance with requirements that could have a direct and material effect on a major federal program in order to determine our auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing our opinion on compliance and to test and report on internal control over compliance in accordance with OMB Circular A-133.

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether City's financial statements are free of material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grants, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the determination of financial statement amounts. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit. Also in accordance with OMB Circular A-133, we examined, on a test basis, evidence about City's compliance with the types of compliance requirements described in the "U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-133 Compliance Supplement" applicable to each of its major federal programs for the purpose of expressing an opinion on City's compliance with those requirements. While our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion, it does not provide a legal determination on City's compliance with those requirements.

Scope and Timing of the Audit

Audit fieldwork was substantially completed in September 2009. We have previously communicated to you in a letter on March 31, 2009 the significant risks of material misstatement addressed by our auditing procedures which included:

- Fraud risk for cash receipts and cash disbursements
- Risk of material fraud or misstatement associated with investments
- Risk of improper revenue recognition
- Risk of improper classification of expenditures
- Risk of errors associated with identifying capital asset additions and deletions
- Risk of unallowable transfers between funds

Significant Audit Findings

We have separately reported to you that we noted no deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses.

Qualitative Aspects of Accounting Practices

Management is responsible for the selection and use of appropriate accounting policies. In accordance with the terms of our engagement letter, we will advise management about the appropriateness of accounting policies and their application. The significant accounting policies used by the City are described in note one to the financial statements. GASB Statement No. 45, "Accounting and Financial Reporting by Employers for Postemployment Benefits Other than Pensions" was adopted and implemented during the year ended June 30, 2009. We noted no transactions entered into by the City during the year for which there is a lack of authoritative guidance or consensus. There are no significant transactions that have been recognized in the financial statements in a different period than when the transaction occurred.

Accounting estimates are an integral part of the financial statements prepared by management and are based on management's knowledge and experience about past and current events and assumptions about future events. Certain accounting estimates are particularly sensitive because of their significance to the financial statements and because of the possibility that future events affecting them may differ significantly from those expected.

Examples of significant judgments and estimates reflected in the City's financial statements and disclosures include:

- Judgments concerning which capital projects represent ordinary maintenance activities necessary to keep an asset operational for its originally intended useful life versus significant improvement, replacement, and life extending projects that should be capitalized as additions to capital assets.
- Estimates involving revenues and expenses to be accrued as of year end.
- Estimates of liabilities for claims and judgments.

Significant Difficulties Encountered in Performing the Audit

We encountered no difficulties in performing and completing our audit.

Corrected and Uncorrected Adjustments

Professional standards require us to accumulate all known and likely adjustments identified during the audit, other than those that are trivial, and communicate them to the appropriate level of management. Immaterial adjustments have not been reflected in the accompanying financial statements. Corrected and uncorrected adjustments detected as a result of audit procedures involved adjustments of: salary expense, accrued payroll, deferred revenue and a prior period adjustment for a liability in the City's Redevelopment Agency financial statements. These adjustments in the aggregate amounted to less than 5% of total assets for the related opinion unit (major fund, etc.).

Disagreements with Management

For purposes of this letter, professional standards define a disagreement with management as a financial accounting, reporting, or auditing matter, whether or not resolved to our satisfaction, that could be significant to the financial statements or the auditor's report. We are pleased to report that no such disagreements arose during the course of our audit.

Management Representations

We have requested certain representations from management that are included in the management representation letter dated December 11, 2009.

Management Consultations with Other Independent Accountants

In some cases, management may decide to consult with other accountants about auditing and accounting matters, similar to obtaining a "second opinion" on certain situations. If a consultation involves application of an accounting principle to the City's financial statements or a determination of the type of auditor's opinion that may be expressed on those statements, our professional standards require the consulting accountant to check with us to determine that the consultant has all the relevant facts. To our knowledge, there were no such consultations with other accountants.

Other Audit Findings or Issues

We generally discuss a variety of matters, including the application of accounting principles and auditing standards, with management each year prior to retention as the City's auditors. However, these discussions occurred in the normal course of our professional relationship and our responses were not a condition to our retention.

This information is intended solely for the use of City Council and management of the City and is not intended to be and should not be used by anyone other than these specified parties.

Mayor Hoffman McCann P.C.

Irvine, California
December 11, 2009